

## **Cal/EPA Environmental Justice Action Plan**

### **ARB Pilot Project Update for Reduction of Air Pollution Exposure in Urban Communities in Southern California October 13, 2005**

#### **I. Lead Agency:** Air Resources Board (ARB)

#### **I. Project Area:** The communities of Commerce, Mira Loma, and Wilmington in Los Angeles metropolitan area.

##### **Area Demographics:**

- **Commerce:** 2% African American; 2% Asian; 90% Hispanic or Latino (of any race); and 6% White; residents living below the poverty level: 23%.
- **Mira Loma:** 6% African American; 4% Asian; 44% Hispanic or Latino (of any race); 42% White; 4% other; living below the poverty level: 12%.
- **Wilmington:** 6% African American; 8% Asian; 71% Hispanic or Latino (of any race); 13% White; 2% other; living below the poverty level: 23%.

#### **II. Project Start Date:** June 2005.

**II. Project Summary:** ARB staff will lead a pilot project in Southern California focusing on reducing air pollution exposure and risk to children. The pilot project will be a collaborative effort with the community, other Cal/EPA Boards, Offices, and Departments (BDOs), local agencies and businesses, and other stakeholders. The pilot project includes exploration of ways to assess cumulative risks and to apply precautionary approaches. While ARB will be focusing these projects on community specific issues, it is our intent to identify applications and strategies in this pilot project that can be transferable to other communities throughout the State. The project also provides ARB opportunities to explore concepts and develop tools to address the complex environmental justice issues of cumulative impacts and precautionary approaches.

**III. Project Status:** In June 2005, ARB held Local Advisory Group (LAG) meetings in all three communities selected for the Southern California Pilot Project. The LAG meetings were attended by a diverse mix of community, environmental, business, and government agency representatives. Community members provided us with written suggestions for projects to be explored by the group. ARB is reviewing those suggestions, identifying which local or State agencies have jurisdiction in these areas, and contacting agency staff to work with us as we begin to evaluate and assess the suggested projects. This fall, ARB plans to schedule additional LAG meetings to discuss our findings and to work with the LAGs to prioritize which projects to move ahead on.

Among the top concerns of all three communities were the impacts of rail yards and port activities. ARB has held two public workshops in August on an agreement between ARB and the rail companies to reduce community exposure to diesel particulate matter. A hearing on this subject will be held in October. ARB also plans to hold two public meetings this fall on mitigating the emissions from port-related activities. All of these opportunities provide valuable input to our understanding of cumulative impacts in southern California communities.

**Future Activities:** The Children's Environmental Risk Reduction Plan will be developed by

early 2006 and implementation of the pilot projects will begin during the first quarter of 2006.

- III. Challenges:** We met with the three local advisory groups initially in early summer. However, due to the communities' desire to focus and resolve the rail MOU before identifying and prioritizing other issues, we have not met since our initial meetings. We do have a LAG meeting scheduled in Wilmington on November 7 and we are working with community groups and other stakeholders to schedule the next LAG meetings in Mira Loma and Commerce.
- IV. Addressing Cumulative Impacts:** A key component of the Cal/EPA Environmental Justice Action Plan is to assess multi-media cumulative impacts. Community members raised concerns about the multitude of pollution sources in their community both at CEJAC meetings and in our individual LAG meetings. In particular, communities were interested in sources of diesel emissions whose localized impacts have not been well characterized in the past. To address this concern, we are developing comprehensive local databases of emissions sources and sites with hazardous materials. Such community databases can be used to identify and prioritize issues of concern, to understand the spatial relationships between sensitive receptors and sources of pollution, and to provide the basis for cumulative impact analysis. The focus of this effort will be on identifying sources of air pollution, but we are working with agencies to add other environmental data, where available.

Building upon earlier work, ARB is proposing to work with the Wilmington community to develop a comprehensive inventory of pollution sources which can serve as the basis for assessing cumulative impacts. In addition, ARB is working on a community-level air pollution cumulative risk modeling approach that can estimate cumulative risk at the neighborhood level. While ARB has had a head start in the Wilmington area, ARB is also interested in exploring ways to assess cumulative impacts in the other two communities.

ARB has new and ongoing research projects that will supplement the ChERRP activities and add to our understanding of cumulative impacts. These studies are described below:

- Air Monitoring studies in Wilmington: There are three air monitoring studies that will be conducted in Wilmington. The first will examine whether hot spots form near air pollution sources, and how quickly air pollution levels decline as you move away from the source of emissions. A second study will test the effectiveness of low-cost passive monitors for community monitoring, and a third study will look at ultra-fine particles near freeways using a mobile monitoring platform to measure real-time changes in air pollution. Each of these studies will document air pollution levels in Wilmington and may prove very useful in validating the results from the cumulative impact modeling being done as part of the pilot project.
- Comprehensive port emission inventory, risk assessment, and mitigation plan: As part of ARB's ongoing work to assess and reduce air pollution emissions from port and intermodal facilities, ARB is working to develop an emission inventory from port activities, a risk assessment, and a statewide rail and ports mitigation plan that will benefit communities such as Wilmington, Commerce, and Mira Loma.

- Evaluate public health in impacted communities: ARB will be working with the Department of Health Services and other public health agencies to collect available health data on the overall health status of the residents of the communities covered by the pilot project. There is also a study underway to develop tools to explore how community vulnerability can affect the cumulative impacts of pollution.

**V. Addressing Precautionary Approach:** Each of ARB's selected communities had concerns that adequate precaution was not being exercised at existing facilities. ARB proposes to select a community-specific project for each area and explore ways to apply precautionary approaches to reduce air pollution exposure. ARB will include other local and State agencies as needed. Examples of potential projects that have been suggested by community members include evaluating the inorganic lead emissions from a battery recycling facility, assessing impacts from unplanned emission releases from refineries, and evaluating site remediation plans for hazardous waste site cleanup.

All three communities expressed concern about excessive truck idling at intermodal and distribution centers in their communities. To address these concerns ARB is proposing the development of a community-based program to promote local compliance and enforcement for ARB's heavy-duty truck idling regulation. This project will explore ways to empower the community and local enforcement to enforce the heavy duty diesel idling regulation. This project will include the development of educational materials for local government agencies and community members so that they can become involved in promoting compliance and enforcement of diesel truck idling rules.

**VI. Original Proposed Project End Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2006.

**VII. Revised Project End Date & Explanation for Delay in Timeline:** On schedule. No revision to project end date.

**VIII. For More Information**

Please direct comments & questions to:

**Dale Shimp**

Manager, Environmental Justice Section,  
Planning & Technical Support Division, ARB  
dshimp@arb.ca.gov  
(916) 324-7156